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OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2022

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Designed by Emmett Jordan



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Thanksgiving! We are grateful
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One of the Largest Turnouts on Record for the 2022 SDA Annual Conference!

We were thrilled to be back in-person again for this year's SDA Annual Conference, September 13-15 at the Keystone Conference Center! We had over 1,000 people join us in Keystone, which was one of our largest turnouts. Plus, there was another 150 people participating on our virtual platform!

This year we offered **48 breakout sessions** during the course of the three-day event, featuring close to **85 different speakers!** These speakers were from both district members and associate members, and their sessions covered a wide-variety of topics, from very technical subjects to overarching issues that apply to all district types.



Cole Karr from the National Special Districts Coalition and Allison Ulmer from Collins Cole Flynn Winn & Ulmer were among our many speakers.

Our five keynote speakers were both educational and thought-provoking (please see pages 12-13 for the full run-down of their presentations). Laurie Guest joined us at Wednesday's lunch

Continued on page 7



Keynote speaker Anton Gunn kicked off the Conference on Tuesday morning.



Jason Hewlett was entertaining and educational at Wednesday's breakfast!



Laurie Guest congratulates the game of chance winner at Wednesday's lunch!



JoAnn Groff walked through a variety of property tax issues at Thursday's breakfast.



SDA's Executive Director, Ann Terry, enjoyed all the keynote presentations.



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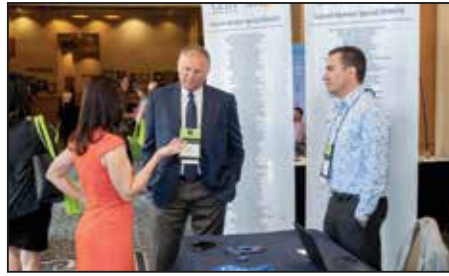
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The Conference provided great opportunities for attendees to visit with our sponsors and exhibitors. From left to right: Representatives from Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority; Bobby Otte and Anthony Briseño from CEBT; and Maria Lara and Mac Clemmens from Streamline.



for an encore appearance (she was also a keynote speaker at the 2015 Annual Conference), and she was a huge hit! All of the keynote speakers were very well received, and more than one received a standing ovation.

With our hybrid event, we were able to livestream not only our keynote speakers, but also all of our breakout sessions right to our virtual platform. This was a convenient way for folks to participate remotely, and it even made it possible for attendees in Keystone to sit outside or in a quiet place and still follow along with the sessions. And with everything being recorded, everyone who registered for Conference can now go back and access the recordings of the breakout sessions for a full year!



The Presentation of the Colors was performed on Tuesday morning by the local Honor Guard.



The singing of the National Anthem was also part of Tuesday's Welcome Breakfast.



Randall McKinnon joined us at the Opening Night Extravaganza on Tuesday night, and Shaylee Andreatta from Cucharas Sanitation and Water District even helped provide some music!



We once again had tremendous support from all of our sponsors and exhibitors (please see page 21 for the full listing). In addition to our **16 Platinum Sponsors**, we had a total of **14 Gold, 11 Silver, and 9 Bronze Sponsors** as well as **22 booth exhibitors!**

At the **Welcome Breakfast** on Tuesday morning we were joined by members of the local **Honor Guard for the Presentation of the Colors**. We also enjoyed a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem.

At **Tuesday's Award Luncheon**, we had the honor of recognizing this year's **six very deserving districts, Board members, and managers** (please see pages 17-19 for the full write-up on each winner). We moved the Awards Luncheon to the first day of Conference last year, and it worked so well that we did it again this year. This was a perfect way for everyone to celebrate and recognize the winners throughout our time together.

On Tuesday afternoon, attendees enjoyed the nice, autumn weather on the beautiful patio at the Conference Center as the **Opening Night Extravaganza began**. Perennial favorite, **Randall McKinnon**, was on hand outside to provide live music as folks relaxed and visited with their colleagues. We even had some audience participation from Chris Sheafor from the Health District of Northern Larimer County and Shaylee Andreatta from Cucharas Sanitation and Water District.

Inside, there was a **DJ, trivia, and of course lots of delicious food**. In a surprising twist, the fire alarm inadvertently went off at the Conference Center so people had extra time outside (18 minutes to be exact) to enjoy the beautiful weather and Randall's music!

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Attendees enjoyed the autumn weather on the beautiful Conference Center patio on Tuesday evening.

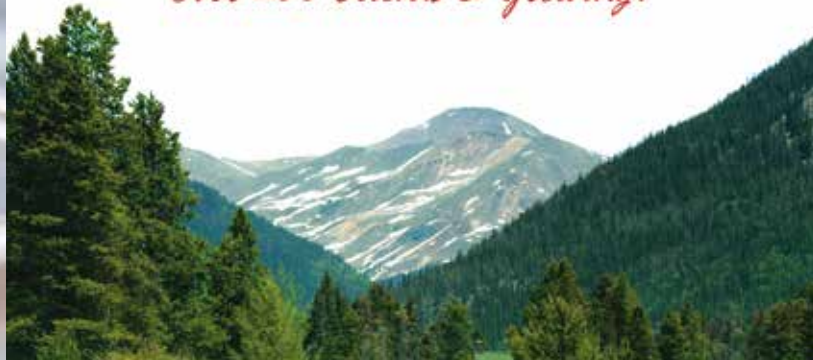
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Over the course of three days, the Keystone chefs used some pretty amazing amounts of food to feed our huge group:

137

gallons of coffee

51

gallons of iced tea

43

gallons of lemonade

3,000

eggs

4,050

strips of bacon

68.5

gallons of soup



An unexpected fire alarm provided even more time to enjoy the patio on Tuesday night!



The Opening Night Extravaganza included a DJ and trivia bingo.



Some of the lucky bingo winners showing off their winning cards!



The bingo answers came from trivia questions covering a large variety of topics. Here is another lucky winner!



The Opening Night Extravaganza was a great way to unwind after the busy day of sessions.

**Conference photos by
Paul Brandner Photography**

At Wednesday's breakfast, **we paid tribute to Evan Goulding**, SDA's long-time Executive Director who passed away this spring. A thoughtful memorial video was played, and Ann Terry, SDA's Executive Director, led a moment of silence in honor of Evan.



Wednesday's breakfast included a lovely memorial video for Evan Goulding.

On Wednesday afternoon, the **Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool's Annual Membership Meeting** featured keynote speaker Chris Nunes who discussed how to facilitate change through innovation.

Continued on page 11



Larry Moore presided over the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool's Annual Membership Meeting.



The CSD Pool's Annual Membership Meeting included a presentation from keynote speaker Chris Nunes.

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Attendees got an up close look at the CSD Pool's SKIDTRUCK, a unique and immersive training tool.



This group even got to ride in the SKIDTRUCK and experience it firsthand!

The **Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool** also had their **SKIDTRUCK** on hand to demonstrate the immersive, driving experience offered by this unique training tool. The SKIDTRUCK prepares drivers for inclement weather and dangerous driving conditions, and attendees even got to take a ride!

We brought back the popular **Boots and BBQ event on Wednesday evening**. We moved the event into the ballroom due to the rain, and it turned out to be a great place to enjoy the delicious food and the live music from the **Beau Thomas Band**. There were even prize drawings with our sponsors and exhibitors!

The **Grab-and-Go lunch on Thursday** was also back this year, and it was a convenient way for everyone to pick out their lunch and take it with them.

All in all it was an amazing event, jam-packed with tons of beneficial training and plenty of opportunities to catch up with special district leaders from around the state.

And now we can't wait to do it all again in 2023! **Mark your calendars and plan to join us Tuesday, September 12-Thursday, September 14 back up in Keystone!** 🍂



The Beau Thomas Band provided live music for Wednesday night's Boots and BBQ event.



There were also prize drawings on Wednesday night. Here Ann Terry shows off the Russell Wilson jersey that was the prize from Gregory and Associates!



Attendees enjoyed catching up with each other over the course of the event.

SDA 

Plan to Join Us in 2023!

SDA Annual Conference
September 12-14, 2023
Keystone Conference Center

2022 Conference Keynote Speakers Were **Inspiring and Educational!**



Anton Gunn (above and below) kicked off this year's Conference on Tuesday morning with his thought-provoking presentation, **"The Admired Leader: How to Increase Your Influence and Impact."** The themes and ideas he discussed were universally applicable, and his charismatic style was a great way to get this year's Conference going.



At Tuesday's Awards Luncheon, we not only honored this year's annual award winners, but we also heard from U.S. Air Force veteran, Dr. Jannell MacAulay. In her enlightening presentation, **"Command Your Mindset,"** Jannell shared strategies for living a more connected and present life.





The keynote speakers at this year's Annual Conference were the perfect complement to the 48 breakout sessions that were offered over the course of the event!



Wednesday morning started off on a high note with **Jason Hewlett's** (above) entertaining and insightful presentation, **"The Promise: Discover Your Signature Moves."** Through his uncanny impressions of Elton John, the Bee Gees, and even a velociraptor, Jason demonstrated firsthand the idea of signature moves and how empowering team members to use their signature moves in an organization can bring success to new levels.



Laurie Guest (above) joined us at Wednesday's lunch for a witty and informative discussion on the importance of communication and taking time to reenergize. **"Are We Having Fun Yet?"** provided real-world examples of how to easily improve communication, which will in turn improve teamwork and connectedness. Laurie also shared tips on ways to become revitalized.

On Thursday morning, **JoAnn Groff's** presentation, **"The Good, The Bad, and The Confusing,"** examined the in's and out's of property tax issues. Drawing from her wealth of knowledge and astute understanding of the complex issues involved, JoAnn walked through what districts need to know about this oftentimes confusing topic. 🍷

Congratulations to the 2022 James T. Walker Leadership Scholarship Winner!

SDA is pleased to congratulate Carolyn Frainier from the Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority as the 2022 James T. Walker Leadership Scholarship winner! Carolyn was recognized as this year's winner during the recent SDA Annual Conference.

This leadership scholarship is presented in honor of James T. Walker, a founding SDA Board Member.

"We were pleased to choose Carolyn as this year's winner," said Ann Terry, SDA's Executive Director. "Carolyn demonstrates SDA's high standard of leadership and is very deserving of this award."

Congratulations, Carolyn!







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Congratulations to the 2022 SDA Annual Award Winners!

The 2022 SDA Annual Awards Luncheon took place during the recent Annual Conference, and it was once again a wonderful opportunity to honor outstanding districts, Board members, and Managers.



Board Members Scott Dorman and Stan Gengler were proud to accept the 2022 Safety District of the Year award on behalf of the Estes Valley Recreation and Park District.

The first award was presented to the **Estes Valley Recreation and Park District** as the winner of the **Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool's 2022 Safety District of the Year Award**. When it came time to select the CSD Pool's 2022 District of the Year, Estes Valley was a standout candidate from the very beginning.

As the CSD Pool team toured the District's facilities over the past few years, each visit showed marked improvement in safety and loss prevention and highlighted a commitment to life safety and the preservation of property. Their growth as a CSD Pool member has resulted in a burgeon-

ing safety culture that permeated every aspect of their organization from team meetings, safety committees, and day-to-day operations. Today, they are more organized and efficient; dedicated to completing training programs both in-person and online; and doing their best to stay proactive in their safety program. All of the Estes Valley Recreation and Park team is proud of what they are doing, something that is obvious when touring their District's facilities.

This award doesn't just mark the culmination of their hard work; it is only the beginning of what they are sure to accomplish in the coming years.



David Lighthart was thrilled to accept his Manager of the Year award.

Next we were pleased to honor this year's **Manager of the Year Award winner**, **David Lighthart from the Evergreen Metropolitan District, West Jefferson County Metropolitan District, and Kit-tredge Sanitation and Water District.**

David's career with the Evergreen Metropolitan District began 38 years ago in the Wastewater Department in plant maintenance. He was quickly promoted to Wastewater Lead Operations Manager, followed by a promotion to District Operations Manager, Assistant General Manager, and finally to General Manager, a role he has served in for the past eight years.

Under David's leadership, the Evergreen Metropolitan District has worked to improve the working environment of all departments through careful analysis of the workers and making the necessary changes to enhance their working conditions. David is known for his technical knowledge of the operations of the District, but beyond that, he is consistently praised for his abilities to inspire and empower the people around him. Using these skills, David has strived to create a district that consistently goes above and beyond.

David's impact is far-reaching. In 2020, the town of Evergreen was faced with the Elephant Butte Fire right in their own backyard. The established agreement that David had put in place with the Evergreen Fire Protection District allowed re-

Continued on page 18

sponse units to quickly access the water at Evergreen Lake and use that resource to rapidly control the fire. Subsequently, David also coordinated with local landowners to ensure the runoff from the fire did not enter the upper Bear Creek Watershed, thus preventing contamination of the water supply for the community.

David has also been a vital part of growth within the Evergreen Metropolitan District. He paved the way for additional streamlined consolidations; improved communications within the water, wastewater, and construction departments; and took an active role in weekly department meetings in order to gain a better understanding of the District while fostering relationships with his employees.

David continues to lead by example, frequently visiting job sites and facilities to ensure that the crews have what they need to make safety a top priority while efficiently keeping the projects on schedule. From time to time, you may even catch David performing traffic duty to ensure that his crews have the necessary breaks to keep their minds focused on the tasks at hand.

Turning to our **Board Member of the Year Award**, we were proud to honor **James G. (Jim) Ling from the South Fort Collins Sanitation District** as this year's winner.

Jim is Chairman of the South Fort Collins Sanitation District and has served on the Board of Directors for 17 years. Jim is a retired US Air Force Colonel and Vietnam veteran and holds degrees in chemical engineering, industrial engineering, and engineering economics as well as a PhD in nuclear resource management. In September 2001, Jim moved to Fort Collins with his wife and daughter.

During his tenure on the Board, Jim negotiated the first inter-district agreement with the Fort Collins-Loveland Water District and South Fort Collins Sanitation District, which clarified cost-sharing arrangements, established annual joint Board meetings, and improved the collaborative decision-making process between two affiliated Boards. In addition, Jim was the driving force behind two major wastewater plant expansions, including a recent \$35 million reclamation



Jim Ling was all smiles as he received his Board Member of the Year award.

plant to accommodate future growth in residential and commercial wastewater needs. Jim helped to ensure that the project was under budget and on schedule while also meeting all EPA and CDPHE requirements.

Through Jim's leadership and forward-looking management, the District has been able to effectively manage the ever-increasing demand for low service fees despite increases in other area utilities. Within the last five years, the District has grown exponentially with approximately 2,347 sewer taps and an average of 50 sewer inclusions, and Jim has been a major factor in helping to manage this tremendous growth.

Jim has consistently utilized thoughtful and knowledgeable leadership by incorporating his unparalleled ability for careful listening and collaboration. These unique abilities have helped to ensure that the District will continue to effectively put the needs of the community at the forefront of their service.



Kathy Morris and Al White were recognized for their service to the SDA Board of Directors.

This year we also had the opportunity to recognize two individuals for their dedicated service to the SDA Board of Directors.

We would like to thank **Kathy Morris from Durango Fire Protection District** for her eight years of dedicated service to the SDA Board. During Kathy's years of service, she served one year as Board Secretary, two years as Board Treasurer, and two years as Board Vice President.

We would also like to thank **Al White from Fraser Valley Metropolitan Recreation District** for his years of dedicated service to the SDA Board of Directors. Al has served on the SDA Board while also participating as a key contributor to the SDA Legislative Committee for several years.





Scott Ledin and Ann McConnell from the Fraser Valley Metropolitan Recreation District proudly accepted the 2022 J. Evan Goulding District of the Year award.

We were pleased to present our final award to the **Fraser Valley Metropolitan Recreation District** as the **2022 J. Evan Goulding District of the Year**.

The J. Evan Goulding District of the Year Award was established by the SDA Board of Directors to recognize a district's major accomplishments, focused on the aspects of community spirit and leadership. This year's winner, the Fraser Valley Metropolitan Recreation District (FVMRD), has shown tremendous embodiment of both of these qualities.

The history of the District's emphasis on community spirit began in 1978. During this year, the residents of Fraser Valley submitted a petition to the Grand County District Court requesting the creation of a special recreation district. The request was initiated to provide the Fraser Valley facilities a way to offer recreational and educational programs that would enhance and stimulate the summer season economy, thereby benefiting the community. This broader offering of recreational activities would need an entity to organize, manage, and fund the programs, thus the creation of the special district.

The original service plan outlined the facilities that the committee of residents had envisioned. These services included

a golf course, tennis courts, swimming pool, community building/clubhouse, baseball/softball fields, soccer fields, and a trail system. In January 1979, voters approved the formation of Fraser Valley Metropolitan Recreation District, and a mill levy increase was added to property taxes to support the operation.

In the last five years, the District has taken on several large projects: completion of the "freeze the rink" ice rink refrigeration project; updating the agency Master Plan; two different instances of bond re-financing for community enhancement projects, saving taxpayers over \$2,000,000 and reducing the debt service term by two years; negotiating private vendor lease agreements at the Fraser Valley Sports Complex for the operation of an aerial adventure park and paintball venue; the successful passage of a revenue stabilizing measure to protect property tax assessment rate reductions; and executing an exclusive launch/land agreement with a hot air balloon operator.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic created numerous challenges for the District. Loss of revenue and jobs from facility closures was abundant. Immense strain was felt across all facilities from workforce shortages forcing reduced

hours and in some cases, additional complete closures. New protocols had to be developed for all district operations. FVMRD was not immune to the challenges that we all faced during this difficult time in our history.

A critical component of FVMRD's success is their innovative, service-oriented, hardworking, and loyal employees and volunteers. These dedicated individuals pour their hearts and souls into the District, with the majority of the management team having been with the agency for over ten years. When there is a need, the staff has risen to the challenge through things like operating a boutique bowling alley and movie theater in order to keep the community asset open and to improve the variety of activities available to the community.

Despite facing significant challenges, FVMRD has continued to thrive and has grown significantly over the years, encompassing 218 square miles in the eastern portion of Grand County. The towns of Winter Park, Fraser, Tabernash, and surrounding rural areas all benefit from the services provided by the District. Currently, FVMRD is comprised of six service divisions, including Administrative, Recreation, Park Maintenance, and Family Entertainment. FVMRD takes pride in owning and operating multiple award-winning facilities, including the Grand Park Community Recreation Center; Pole Creek Golf Club & Bistro 28 Restaurant; the Fraser Valley Sports Complex; the IceBox Ice Rink; and the Foundry Cinema & Bowl. In addition, there are a large number of youth and adult recreation programs, summer day camps, and specialty camps and events that are managed by FVMRD.

For over 40 years, FVMRD has enriched the community that surrounds them. They strive each day to keep their mission alive of providing a recreational and educational experience for their residents and guests through innovative, quality programs and facilities that promote health and wellness. 🍷

The SDA Board of Directors and staff would like to congratulate all of the 2022 award winners!



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A Big Thank You to the SDA Annual Conference Volunteers!

Each year at Conference we are joined at the registration desk by a fantastic group of volunteers who all lend a hand to check people in, answer questions, and anything else that comes up. And this year was no different!

SDA's Executive Director, Ann Terry, was thrilled to see our volunteers again this year. "We are always grateful for this group of helpful and friendly folks who assist our attendees in any way they can."

We would like to take a moment to say thank you to the 2022 Conference volunteers:

- » Rick Chase from Colorado Retirement Association
- » Beth Justice from Colorado SIPA
- » Lane Melott from Centennial Consulting Group
- » Whitney Miller from Park Meadows Business Improvement District



SDA Leadership Academy

2023 SDA Leadership Academy

Applications Available Soon

The planning process is already well underway for the 2023 SDA Leadership Academy! This popular training fills up quickly so don't miss your chance to be a part of this year-long program that is scheduled to kick-off in early 2023.

We would like to thank COLOTRUST for sponsoring the 2023 Leadership Academy, which is sure to be another exciting year of education and growth.

Since the SDA Leadership Academy began in 2012, close to 511 Leadership Fellows have graduated from this unique leadership program that features a variety of speakers discussing issues centered around personal and professional development.

As a Leadership Academy Fellow, you will participate in



at least four events throughout the year plus the SDA Annual Conference in Keystone in September if you are able to join us. You will also receive weekly leadership themed emails which offer keen insights and lessons on leadership from a wide variety of sources.

Applications will be available soon so please watch your emails and visit the SDA website at www.sdaco.org if you are interested in applying. The class size will be limited to 45 people, which is a great size for group conversations and interactions.

"This is a remarkable opportunity you don't want to miss," said Ann Terry, SDA's Executive Director. "We look forward to receiving your applications and welcoming our next class of Leadership Fellows!"

Editor's Note: SDA has a variety of FAMLI resources available on our website at www.sdaco.org. From the homepage, please click on “Resources” near the top of the page and then scroll down until you see the blue “FAMLI Resources” box (you do need to be logged into our website to access this information). From there you will see a variety of information, including our FAMLI Program FAQ which contains a sample Board Resolution to Opt-Out of the FAMLI Program and a companion Notification to Employees of the opt-out action.

Preparing for FAMLI LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Unlike businesses, Colorado local governments have options regarding their participation in the paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program. Here are the steps local governments should take to prepare for FAMLI:

1. Determine your local government's participation in FAMLI

Local governments have three options regarding participation in the FAMLI program:

- » Participate in FAMLI. This option means the local government agency agrees to pay the employer share of the premium (0.45% of wages if the local government has 10 or more employees, and 0% of wages if the local government has fewer than 10 employees) and remit employees' share of the premium (0.45% of wages) along with wage data to the FAMLI Division once a quarter.
- » Decline participation in FAMLI. In order to decline participation in the FAMLI program, the local government's governing body must vote to do so. The local government must then notify the FAMLI Division of their vote to decline participation. The decision to decline is good for eight years from the date of the vote to decline participation. The local government must hold another vote if it wishes to continue opting-out beyond eight years.
- » Decline employer participation in FAMLI. This option allows a local government agency to decline participation as described above, while allowing the agency to assist employees who want to individually participate in the FAMLI program by facilitating voluntary payroll deductions, with remittance of the employee share of the premium (0.45% of wages) and wage data once a quarter to the FAMLI Division.

When can we vote to opt out of FAMLI? Anytime during 2022, but local governments are not required to give FAMLI notice of their decision to opt out until January 1, 2023.

2. Register with the FAMLI system (Fall 2022)

Every local government employer must register with FAMLI's online system, including those which choose not to participate in FAMLI. Registering with the system and uploading your documents will enable FAMLI to keep track of local government employers' current intentions for participation, the obligation to revisit a declination vote after eight years, and enable local government employers to provide an affordable benefit if they choose to remit premiums and wage data for employees who self-elect coverage.

FAMLI's online employer service system is expected to be available for registration during the Fall of 2022, during which time we will have support staff available to help employers navigate the process.

Preparing for FAMLI

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

3. Notify FAMLI of your local government's decision

Local governments which vote to decline participation in the FAMLI program must notify the FAMLI Division of their decision by January 1, 2023.

What does our local government need to send to FAMLI?

After registration, a local government that votes to opt-out of the FAMLI program must notify the FAMLI Division on letterhead and must indicate the date the vote was taken and the result of the vote. If the local government has voted to opt out, but intends to assist its employees who choose to individually participate in the FAMLI program, this information must be included in the notification as well. This notification must be received by January 1, 2023.

What happens if we do not take a vote, or send a letter?

Local governments which do not notify the FAMLI Division of a vote to opt-out by January 1, 2023 will be identified as participants in the FAMLI program. The FAMLI Division will expect both wage data and premium payments due on April 1, 2023. You must notify the Division ahead of January 1, 2023 to avoid paying premiums.

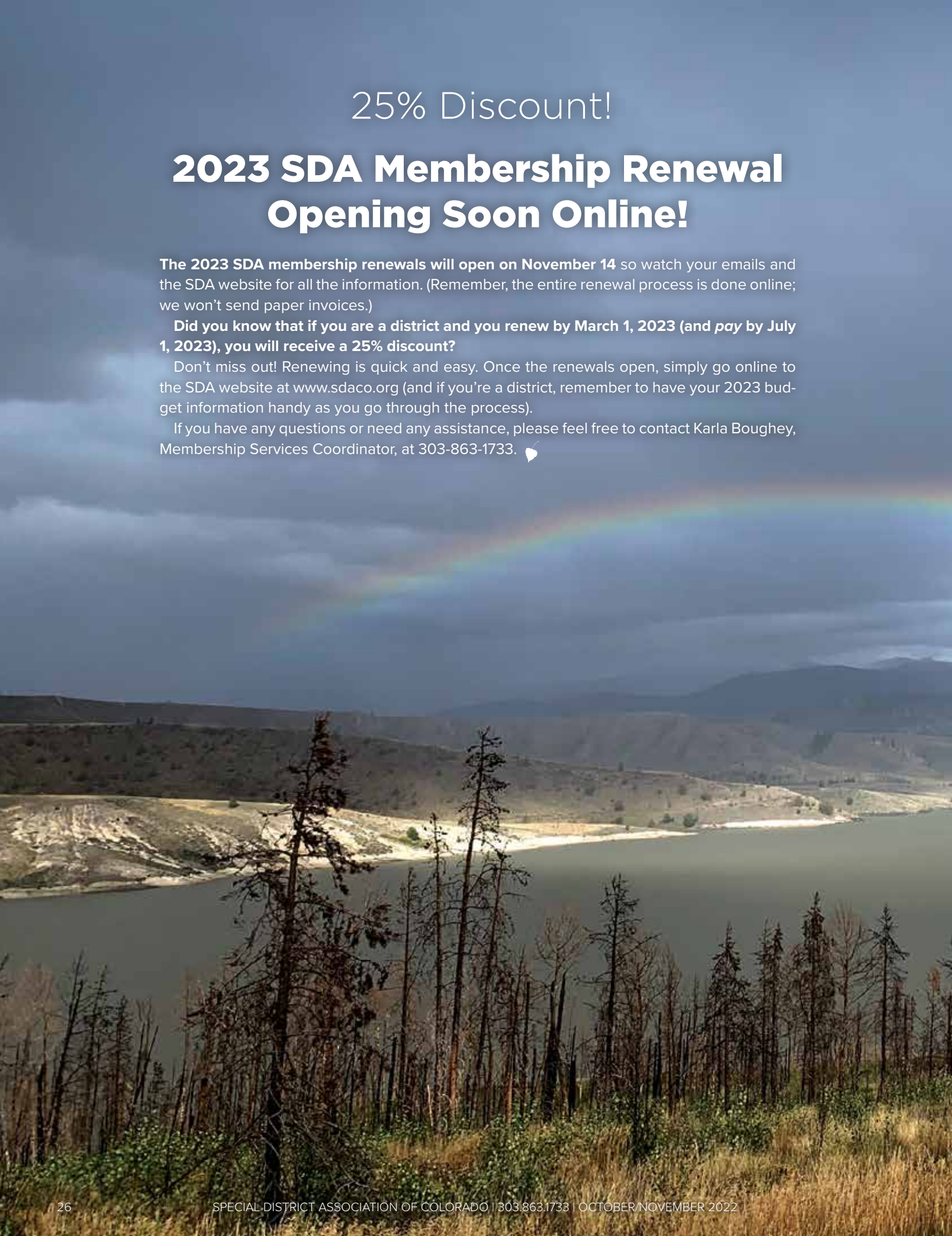
What are the timelines in the rules?

The rules have several timelines to be aware of and follow depending on the option selected by the governing body. Below is a list of the timelines. Please see 7 CCR 1107-2 for more information.

- » Local governments must notify employees of their decision on FAMLI participation within 30 days after the deciding vote. This gives local governments time to communicate their decision to their employees.
- » If the local government chooses to decline to fully participate in the FAMLI program, the decision must be revisited every eight years at a minimum.
- » 180 days notice must be given to employees before any change regarding access to FAMLI benefits is effective. This gives workers time to make arrangements and self-select coverage if they wish to do so. Benefits do not start until 2024.
- » Local governments which choose to fully participate in FAMLI after previously voting to decline participation, as well as individuals who self-elect coverage, must remain in the program and agree to pay premiums for a minimum of three years. If a local government wishes to withdraw from the program at the end of the three-year period, the Division requires a minimum of 90 days notice, so we can change systems to avoid overpayments and miscommunication.



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2023 SDA Membership Renewal Opening Soon Online!

The **2023 SDA membership renewals** will open on **November 14** so watch your emails and the SDA website for all the information. (Remember, the entire renewal process is done online; we won't send paper invoices.)

Did you know that if you are a district and you renew by March 1, 2023 (and pay by July 1, 2023), you will receive a 25% discount?

Don't miss out! Renewing is quick and easy. Once the renewals open, simply go online to the SDA website at www.sdaco.org (and if you're a district, remember to have your 2023 budget information handy as you go through the process).

If you have any questions or need any assistance, please feel free to contact Karla Boughey, Membership Services Coordinator, at 303-863-1733. 🍷



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